MR. SPEAKER : I have already admitted a Half-an-hour Discussion on this.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Is the announcement made by the hon. Minister to the effect that Rs. 5,000 would be given to the farmers, applicable throughout the country or only to Maharashtra? This is a very important point.. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I know it is important. I agree with you.

(Interruptions)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : There are tow sugar mills in my constituency and both are sick...*(Interruptions)* And if you do not allow me, where can I raise this matter? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : You can take part in the Half-an-hour Discussion.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : It is such an important question ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : No. Sit down. We are already on the next question. I know, everybody wants to ask questions on this, it is very important. Every State is affected.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : But we cannot take one hour for one question.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have allowed a Half-an-hour Discussion.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : No. We are on the next question.

(Interruptions)

Forest Ministers' Conference

*262. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether State Forest Ministers' Conference was held recently in Delhi; and

(b) if so, the points discussed and the decisions taken in the Conference?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Conference of State Forest Ministers was held at Delhi on 26-27th August, 1996.

(b) The conference was structured into three broad groups dealing with general forestry, issues relating to north-eastern states and wildlife. The points discussed in the conference are given in the statement laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT.

Main recommendations are given below :

GENERAL FORESTRY

1. Joint Foret Management (JFM) programmes in degraded forests.

Decision to further extend the JFM to well wooded forets may be taken after the committee set up by the National Afforestation and Eco-development Board, Ministry of Environment and Forests has holistically examined various issues related to JFM and submitted its recommendations.

Socio-economic conflicts have been generated due to implementation of JFM programmes leading to loss of usufructory benefits to people living farther away from forests, but were traditionally availing such benefits in the past. It was agreed that the bonafide needs of the people living beyond this threshold may have to be met by making extension forestry an integral part of the JFM. Forest working plans should provide for incorporation of site-specific mico-planning and JFM. comprehensive guidelines should be formulated for training of village communities also in precepts and practices of JFM in which NGOs can play a lead role.

2. Progress of annual reports (statistical) of States/UTs.

Need for compatible databases for aggregation at national level through Forest Survey of India (FSI) and Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education (ICFRE) was stressed.

3. Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980

The directive from the Government of India, that no new proposal under Forest (Conservation) Act would be considered until and unless at least 70% of targets for Compensatory Afforestation (CA) has been achieved, has a salutary effect. Because of many practicable and procedural difficulties this limit may be reduced to 50% for post 1990 diversions. However, the limit could be increased in subsequent years after the operational difficulties have been resolved and procedures harmonised.

The State Government may be empowered, through a State Committee, having a representative from the Government of India, to clear the projects involving diversion of forest land up to 5 hectares in cases involving public utility services, e.g. water supply schemes, schools, hospital, etc. This power, however, would need to be exercised with greatest circumspection under well defined guidelines to be framed by the Government of India in consultations with the State Governments.

Stipulation of compensatory afforestation with regard to the cases of removal of boulders and/or sand from river beds should be waived.

In case of grant and/or renewal of mining leases in forest areas under Mines and Minerals Regulation Development Act, approval under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (FC Act) should be mandatory.

In accordance with the guidelines laid down, in the National Forest Policy, encroachments should not be, as a matter of policy, regularised except in exceptional cases purely on merit.

4. Indian Forest Service (IFS) cadre management

State Governments should obviate delays in confirmation of IFS officers and also expedite ation in all pending cases by forwarding proposals to the Government of India immediately. The State Governments where cadre reviews are (over) due, were requested to forward the proposals at the earliest.

State Governments should notify the cadre forest divisions by location and the extent of total geographical area. This would provide a salutary check on "splitting" the cadre divisions without seeking prior approval of the cadre controlling authority (Central Government). There was a general consensus that practise of posting only cadre officers to cadre posts should be followed strictly.

The State Governments should take affective steps in forwarding nominations of suitable, and willing officers to the Government of India. The State Governments should pursue the issue of posting IFS officers to secretariat posts in other allied departments and/or organisations. The Union Ministry should also take suitable steps to induct forest officers in the Central Government secretariat to ensure full utilisation of the Central Deputation Reserve (CDR).

5. Performance and progress of Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

Following aspects should be incorporated in the existing afforestation schemes :

- JFM mechanism to be in built in the schemes.
- Strengthening of trainign components.
- Emphasis on raising of medicinal plants
- Rotational/controlled grazing in regenerated areas
- Strengthening of monitoring mechanism.

The past practice of earmarking of funds for tree planting under JRY, and other schemes of the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, should be restored. The State Governments could approach the Planning Commission for such earmarking as has been done by the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

6. Preparation of National Forestry Action Programme.

States should expedite approval of State Forestry Action Programmes by State Level Steering Committees for compilation of the National Forestry Action Programme.

7. Externally Aided Projects (EAP)

Complete utilisation of funds under EAPs should be ensured with in the specified time frame as requests for extension are generally not viewed favourably by donor agencies.

8. Training of Staff

The concept of introduction of promotion linked training for Rangers promoted as Assistant Conservator of Forests and Foresters or Deputy Rangers promoted to the rank of Rangers should be pursued. State Governments agreed to consider suitable amendments in subordinate forest service rules to make promotion linked training compulsory.

9. Tree Improvement Programme

Appropriate technologies should be adopted at the field level, through proper extension of the research work being undertaken by ICFRE.

10. Legislation for conferring ownership rights in respect of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) to SCs, STs and OBCs who work in the forest areas

Considering its far reaching implications the State would need to examine the issue, specifically with respect to the rights of other communities. The right to collect MFP by local communities, including tribals, is already in existence in the states and royalty is either not levied or is nominal. Mere transferring of ownership of MFP rights alone will not benefit the communities unless it is supported by an appropriate institutional mechanism for trade. State Governments agreed to look into the matter holistically to improve the flow of benefits to the local communities from trade in MFPs, including waiver of royalty, wherever required. There is need to introduce, and strengthen, JFM mechanism in MFP bearing forest areas to ensure equity among local communities.

11. Whether forest areas to be given to Forest Corporations for raising raw material with funds provided by industries

There was consensus that while taking final decision interests of local communities should be kept paramount.

12. Regarding establishment of wood based industries

The conference did not support prior central approval for establishment of wood based industries in general and saw mills in particular. It was stressed that most of the States have provided adequate checks and balances. If need be, the Government of India could issue comprehensive guidelines to enable the State Governments to formulate uniform rules and regulations

ISSUES RELATING TO NORTH-EASTERN STATES

Need to open dialogue with all District Councils at the State Government level for protection and conservation of forests under their control was emphasised. In view of the common problems vis-a-vis the boundaries within the region, the matter would need to be taken up by Ministry of Environment and Forests with the Home Ministry for which details will be supplied by the States early.

The areas affected by deforestation and shifting cultivation would be identified using Satellite imagery so that the areas can be pinpointed and specific action taken to counter the deforestation. Planning Commission will be approached for higher allocation for forestry, especially for settlement of jhumias of the region, for development of areas affected by shifting cultivation.

Ministry of Environment and Forests would examine the applicability of Forests (Conservation) Act, 1980 in areas under District Councils keeping in view the provisions of the constitution.

To check illicit movement and trade of timber greater co-operation would be required from Railways and some specific points of action would need to be suggested by the State Governments. More dialogue at District Council and State level will be required, including dialogue with neighbouring countries, for effective control of movement of forest produce across (inter) national borders. States would assess the sustainable availability of timber for allowing continuance, or otherwise, of the wood-based industries including saw mills.

A meeting of all north-eastern States shall be held in the region with all concern functionaries, including their Chief Secretaries, to discuss problems of deforestation, control on timber based industries and application of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

WILDLIFE

The implementation of the recommendation of the Subramaniam Committee was reviewed. There was a need to sensitise the State Governments at higher levels to commit adequate resources to implement the recommendations within a time frame. It was agreed to review the situation after six months and States were asked to submit reports to Government of India in this regard.

Budget allocation to wildlife sector has been less than suggested 15% of the total forestry budget in most of the States. This situation should be improved by seeking enhanced allocation of funds in the State budget and in Externally Aided Forestry Sector projects. All ongoing centrally sponsored schemes on wildlife be continued during the IX Plan with greater vigour along with creation of seven new schemes as suggested by the IX Plan Working Group set up by the Planning Commission. Three centrally sponsored schemes, i.e. "Control of Poaching and Illegal Trade in Wildlife", "Nature Education and Interpretation" and "Conservation of Rhinos" be revived with expanded mandate.

The concept of having State Level Co-ordination Committee involving all enforcement agencies to control illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products was approved and appropriate action should be taken by the States.

Functioning of State Wildlife Advisory Boards was not found satisfactory as they were not meeting regularly. To rectify this situation regular meetings be held as per the requirement of law.

The need for exercising greater control on extraction and trade of medicinal plants was stressed. The Union Ministry would produce identification manuals on medicinal plants, their parts and products, for use by field staff.

The States should make full use of the training facilities at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun and post only trained staff for wildlife duties and also ensure appropriate tenure of postings.

Completion of legal procedures for establishing National Parks and Sanctuaries should be given priority. In case revenue officials were unable to take on this added responsibility, the State Governments should appoint any other official, including forests officers, as collector for this purpose.

[English]

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, I would like to bring to kind notice of the hon. Minister, that a few months back when the State Forest Ministers' Conference took place, the hon. Minister categorically took a decision informing the Conference that even though a lot of degraded forest land was available all over the country, he said that the Government's policy was not to give on lease or transfer any degraded land to any industries. Of course, we appreciate the spirit in which they want to preserve the forest area.

At the same time, I would like to know from the hon. Minister that in case, this degraded forest land could not be utilised or could not be brought back to the full shape over the forest philosophy, and if any industrial concern or the public sector or any industrial organisation comes forward to convert this degraded forest land into a a good land by putting some plantation and everything, is he prepared to give a chance to see that degraded forest land takes shape into a good picture? May I know this from the Minister?

[Translation]

CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question raised by the hon. Member is very explicit and clear.

[English]

We have laid down the answers to his questions on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

This question does not relate to that.

[English]

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, would you agree with the reply? Are you satisfied?

MR. SPEAKER: It is your satisfaction which is more important, Sir.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD: Sir, the hon. Member wanted to know about the decision taken in it. Whatever decision was taken, I have already said about it. Sir, so far as his question is concerned, I would like to reply even in his absence.

[English]

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: I really want to know whether you want to deviate from the policy of not giving a lease or transfer land to industries in case the industrial and public sector undertakings come forward to make good the losses on degraded land by spending their money. In other words, the degraded land is left over without the Government spending the money.

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Reddy, you cannot go on like this. Please sit down. When the Minister is answering, you sit coolly and calmly and listen to the answer. Why are you agitated?

[Translation]

CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD: During the regime of previous Government a proposal for consideration of the Cabinet regarding leasing forest land was sent to industries by the Ministries. A committee of Ministers was formed by the Cabinet. This Committee had asked the Ministries to reconsider it. We are in consultation with all the parties concerned and a final decision will be taken only after consulting them. However, whatever decision will be taken, we are not in favour of leasing out or transfering our forest lands to any industrialists under any circumstance. We cannot permit implementation of any such policy which may overlook the interest of the people associated with at forestation conservation and management of forests. Whatever policy will be framed will have at its centre the Adivasis associated with the forests. Whatever procedure will be prescribed for the interest of these people will be held supreme in it. We cannot compromise over this basic principle and this constitutes the basis of our national forest policy for the year 1988.

[English]

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, my second supplementary question is...

MR. SPEAKER: Very good, you are satisfied.

(Interruptions)

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, there is no other go.

I shall now put my second supplementary question. In our country, as on today, 6,40,000 sq. metres of land to the extent of 19 per cent of the total land of the country is in the form of forests. We all know that in recent years, there has been a phenomenal decrease in the afforestation due to various reasons and I undersatand the Government's policy of introducing a joint management - I mean, the Central Government and the State Government - trying jointly to manage forest protection. They have also informed that a sum of Rs. 5,000 crore has been given as a fund for protecting the forests.

I would like to know from the Minister why in spite of the availability of the fund of Rs. 5,000 crore and in spite of the hectic efforts they are going down in putting up the forests. May I know from the Minister what measures he is taking to protect the interests of forest and afforestation in future?

[Translation]

CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD: Hon'ble Sir, so far this question is concerned, the amount of Rs. 500 crore... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Rs. 5000 crore. *(Interruptions)*

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: It is Rs. 5000 crore. *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD: The decrease in the area of forest as mentioned in 1995 report is really very negligible. The forests have decreased by .01 per cent only and this is mainly due to decrease of forests in north eastern states. You are aware of the situation there. So far as other States are concerned, the forest area has increased. If the decrease registered in north-eastern States is not taken into account, the rest of the States have registered an increase in the forest area. If you so desire, I would give details of the States which have registered such increase. *(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Sir, West Bengal is the first State where the Joint Forest Management Committees were formed to protect the forest. We have an *Aravari* model, the district of Midnapore is called *Aravari* model, where degraded forest land was developed and sal woods were degraded. sal forests were degraded and later on they were developed by the local people by the forming a Joint Forest Management Committee with the involvement of the

local Panchayat. I want to know whether such Joint Forest Management Committees are proposed to be constituted in other areas of our country in order to protect the forest area and to develop the degraded forests.

Part (b) of my question is that there was a proposal from the Government of Tripura to utilise the degraded forests for rubber cultivation. What steps have the Government taken in regard to the proposal made by the Government of Tripura?

[Translation]

CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD : Mr. Speaker, Sir, so far as the question of constitution of commmittees is concerned, as many as 12000 such committees have so far been constituted under the Joint Forest Management Scheme in which 15 States have joined. As regards Tripura, the matter is still under consideration and a decision will be taken.

SHRI DILEEP SINGH BHURIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for saying that the Government do not want to give waste land and the forest land to industrialists. But the tribals living in mountains and forests which have close links with forest have been displaced and are forced to live elswehere, therefore I would like to know whether the Government have any social forest schemes to provide land for developing forests or planting trees in order to help those tribal people.

CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD : Mr. Speaker, Sir, all these things have been provided in the Joint Forest Management Scheme and under this very scheme the Government is paying attention to the tribals and that is why we are not going to lease out forest land to any industry.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Question No. 263.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Question No. 263.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA) : Question No. 263.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Sir, you are the Minister. I am not the Minister. You have to answer the Question. Do not ask the Question.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : It is the old habit. The answer to the Question is that a statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Crimes in Delhi

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*263 SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN :
SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cases of murder particularly of the aged couples, robbery, dacoity, kidnapping, rapes, molestation, atrocities against women in Delhi during the year 1996 till date, month-wise as compared to the year 1995;

(b) the number of such cases in other metropolitan cities in the country during the said period; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to check the increase in the crimes in Delhi and other parts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA) : (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) Information is indicated at *Annexure-I*.

(b) Information as presently available with the National Crime Records Bureau is indicated at *Annexures II-VI*.

(c) The steps taken by the Delhi Police to prevent crime in the National Capital Territory of Delhi include the following :

(i) The existing beat system of patrolling has been reviewed and made more effective. The known bad characters have been put under constant surveillance. A drive has been undertaken to maintain a close watch on criminals who often escape the net of police having no previous history. During the year 1995, more than one lakh 'strangers' were checked out by issuing 'Stranger Rolls'.

(ii) Intelligence is being constantly developed about the movement of desperate criminals and raids are conducted to nab these criminals. Patrolling has been intensified especially on the dark nights as there is a tendency for the criminal gangs to operate during such nights;

(iii) Activities of criminals released from jail and means they have adopted to earn their livelihood are verified and surveillance kept over them.

(iv) A servant verification drive was pursued with renewed vigour. Such drives were organised in different colonies to activate citizens to get their servants verified;

(v) 'Neighbourhood Watch Scheme' has been initiated in different colonies of the capital, senior citizens are visited from time to time by beat officers;

(vi) Modern scientific methods of investigation are used for detection of heinous crimes.

(vii) A Special Task Force has been constituted recently under Delhi Police to effectively